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## THE UNITED STATES AND THE SPANISH AMERICAN COLONIES.

BY M. ROMERO, MEXICAN MINISTER TO THE UNITED STATES.

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I FEEL under deep obligations to Senator Money for his able article published in the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW for September, 1897, in answer to one of mine which appeared in the July number, because it gives me the opportunity to dispel certain misunderstandings and set myself right in this case.

But before proceeding further I desire to make a short statement as to how my article originated. Dr. Ricardo Becerra, a very distinguished man of letters from Colombia, South America, who for several years represented his country at Washington, and who is now living at Caracas, Venezuela, wrote recently a biography of General Don Francisco de Miranda, the principal promoter of the independence of the Spanish colonies of South America. I found in Dr. Becerra's book valuable information, that had not come to my knowledge before, about the work done in Europe in the latter part of the eighteenth century by native Americans and Spanish Jesuits, whom the father of the then reigning King of Spain had previously expelled from his dominions in America, to establish the independence of the Spanish colonies on this continent. I found that the promoters of that cause professed to act in behalf of all the Spanish colonies of America, including Mexico, and as I was sure that Mexico had not been represented at the meetings which were held in Europe in the last quarter of the 18th century, I determined to rectify that statement, and with that purpose in view I wrote an article to vindicate the historical truth in regard to that important event in Spanish American history.

When I began to write my paper I found that the course which the United States pursued towards the revolted colonies

of Spain during their struggle for independence had a close connection with my subject, and about the same time, on January 11, 1897, Senator Hale, of Maine, presented to the Senate a paper entitled "Power to Recognize the Independence of a New State," which was published by order of the Senate, as Senate Document Number 56, Fifty-fourth Congress, Second Session. That paper, which in my opinion had been prepared at the State Department, contained a concise statement of the policy of the United States government towards the Spanish American republics, written especially with a view to support the contention that such recognition is an executive prerogative, and does not rest with Congress, and showing at the same time that the United States has always acted with deliberation in the recognition of belligerent rights or independence of a new foreign state, and complied faithfully with her international obligations, a fact which shows that the policy of the present and the last administration regarding the disturbances in Cuba is in accordance with the precedents established by the fathers of the country at the beginning of the century. I found a great deal of valuable information collected in that paper, which I included in my article.

Reviewing the subject, I also found that the United States had prevented Mexico and Colombia from carrying to Cuba in 1825 the war against Spain, which in all probability might have resulted in the independence of that island, and thinking that that was a pertinent subject, I also mentioned it in my paper.

I entitled my paper "The Origin of Mexican Independence," which I considered an appropriate title, but when I sent it to the editor of *THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW* for publication, he suggested a more comprehensive one, namely, "The United States and the Liberation of the Spanish-American Colonies," and out of deference to his greater knowledge and experience I consented to make the change. This pretentious title caused wider circulation of some passages of the article than would otherwise have been the case, as it was telegraphed all over the country that I had written a paper censuring the United States for not having assisted the Spanish colonies in their war for independence, and for not having permitted Mexico and Colombia to make Cuba independent, when my paper did not contain a word of censure against the United States government, and was only a brief statement of historical facts with quotations from high American

authorities. I thought that the reason for this misunderstanding was the fact that my paper was not read in its entirety by those who telegraph to us press extracts from the same, but only such extracts from it as were thought to be of importance, and thus its object was misapprehended. I was under the impression that anybody who read carefully the whole text could find nothing improper in it, much less disrespectful, either to the United States or to the Spanish government.

I was, therefore, somewhat surprised to see that a man of Senator Money's great abilities should share such views, and it affords me pleasure to have the opportunity of making clear that my article did not contain a word of censure against the United States of America.

Senator Money regards my statement that "this government did not render any material or moral assistance to the cause of independence of the Spanish-American colonies," as a complaint against the United States and considers my assertion to be incorrect. In stating that fact, far from making any complaint against the policy of this government, I on the contrary defended it, by adding "that the United States government being at peace with Spain, considered that it would be a breach of neutrality to aid the movement for the establishment of independence in her colonies." I think that every nation is in honor bound to comply with her treaty stipulations and with the provisions of the law of nations, and that a state that is zealous in fulfilling such duties deserves a great deal of commendation, especially if, for any reason whatsoever, it be to its interests or coincide with its views to set aside such obligations.

I also stated that Mexico did not expect any aid from the United States for the simple reason that there was no ground to expect it, and that she depended only on the patriotism of her sons. In my opinion, it is rash to inaugurate a movement for independence relying mainly on foreign assistance, for obvious reasons; and especially because such assistance is a contingency which may fail for various causes. Then the whole movement would fall through, and the cause of independence would thereby suffer greatly and be highly discredited.

I am glad to see that Senator Money's views agree with mine in that a nation should comply with her international obligations when he says: "It must be remembered that the

warning words of Washington in his farewell address against foreign complications were so recent as to have hardly lost their echo, and had, with other causes, induced an exceedingly conservative and cautious foreign policy."

With a view to show that the recognition by the United States was made long after independence had been achieved, I will state briefly when each of the Spanish colonies accomplished its independence.

The independence of South America proper, that is from the Isthmus of Panama to Cape Horn, was accomplished mainly by two great military geniuses, equal to the greatest in the world, assisted, of course, by several very able and distinguished lieutenants. The two great generals were José de San Martín, born in Yapeyú, in 1778, a small town of the Argentine Republic, on the borders of Paraguay, who operated in the southern part of South America, and Simon Bolívar, born in Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, on July 25, 1783, whose field of operations covered the northern portion of that continent. Both belonged to distinguished families of Spanish descent, and both had received a military education in Spain and had served with distinction in the Spanish army, having flown to their country's assistance when they heard that independence had been proclaimed. Bolívar was of an impulsive and reckless disposition, and suffered, therefore, many serious defeats, while San Martín, being a much more cautious man, was never defeated.

Buenos Ayres or the Argentine Republic, as it is now called, had not only practically established her independence in 1813, after the decisive battles of Tucumán, fought on September 24, 1812, and Salta, on February 20, 1813, although she formally declared her independence only in 1816, but had also driven the Spaniards from Uruguay and Paraguay, and had assisted the adjoining provinces of Upper Peru, which had also rebelled against Spain. The Argentine Republic was, therefore, the base of operations against the Spanish government in the southern portion of South America, and her capital, Buenos Ayres, was the only capital on the continent which, once occupied by the patriots, was never recovered by the Spanish. Peru was at the time, after Mexico, the main seat of Spanish power in America, and the viceroy of Peru sent frequent expeditions not only to subdue the insurgents of Upper Peru, which was a compara-

tively easy task, but also against those of Buenos Ayres, who suffered serious defeats in Vilcapujio on October 1, 1813, and in Ayouma on November 14 of the same year, after having obtained an important victory at San Elezario in 1813. San Martin was for some months commander of the Argentine army in Upper Peru during 1814, and he soon became satisfied that the war could not end until a mortal blow was given to the Spanish power in Peru, and he realized that the only effectual way to accomplish that end was to march from Chile to Peru by the Pacific. He was therefore transferred, at his own request, to the Province of Cuyo, at whose capital, Mendoza, which commanded the main pass of the high cordillera dividing Argentina from Chile, he organized and disciplined his army, availing himself of the assistance of the Chilean patriots who flocked to his banner, among them being O'Higgins, who subsequently took such a leading part in public events in Chile.

On January 17, 1817, San Martin's army left Mendoza and crossed the high cordillera by the Uspallata pass, an undertaking accomplished in the face of the enemy, and which may well be compared with the crossing of the Alps by Hannibal, several centuries before, when he invaded Italy. While in Chile San Martin defeated the Spanish army at Chacabuco on February 12, 1817, which permitted him to occupy Santiago, the capital of that country. The viceroy sent from Lima another army of Spanish veterans, which was defeated by San Martin at Maipo, near Santiago, on April 5, 1818, thus achieving the independence of Chile, and putting the Spanish viceroy at Lima on the defensive.

The governments of the La Plata Provinces and Chile had agreed by a treaty signed at Buenos Ayres on February 5, 1819, to send a joint expedition of their forces to liberate Peru; but before the expedition started a revolution broke out in the Argentine Provinces, necessitating the return of the Argentine army from Chile, and instructions were sent to San Martin to hasten back. San Martin, realizing that if he went back to Buenos Ayres the cause of independence would be seriously jeopardized, made up his mind to disobey his instructions, and he resigned his command, but was recognized as general-in-chief by his army at Rancagua, in Chile, and finally appointed general-in-chief of the joint Chilean-Argentine expeditionary army by the Chilean government. Before San Martin left Chile for Peru,

the Argentine government had been overthrown, anarchy prevailing there, and he found himself, therefore, without a government or nation to back his force, but acted as general-in-chief of the combined army, both by the appointment of the Chilean government and by the act of Rancagua. San Martin knew that he could not march to Peru overland, and he therefore concentrated all his efforts to assist in providing Chile with a navy which would clear the Spanish armada from the Pacific.

The geographical position of Chile, a long and narrow strip of land bounded by the Cordilleras on the east and bordering on the Pacific Ocean, made it indispensable for her to have a navy. It is extraordinary how, being the poorest and the last of the Spanish crown American colonies, she could under the able leadership of O'Higgins, a Chilean patriot of Irish descent, and while she was carrying on her war of independence against Spain, improvise a navy, a task in which she was very substantially assisted by San Martin and the Buenos Ayres government with the man-of-war "*Intrepid*," lost at the capture of Valdivia on February 3, 1820, by Lord Cochrane. By September, 1818, O'Higgins had procured five men-of-war, manned by raw recruits with little or no naval discipline, and a few English and Americans who could not speak Spanish. These he put under the command of Colonel Manuel Blanco Encalada, who had previously served in the Spanish navy, and who attacked the frigate "*Maria Isabel*" on October 28, 1818, while she was under the protection of the forts at the port of Talcahuano, and captured that vessel, as well as five Spanish transports, with 700 Spanish soldiers. The enlarged Chilean navy was placed under the command of dashing Lord Cochrane, a very distinguished admiral of the British Royal Navy, then under a cloud at home, who took service under the Chilean flag, attacked and defeated the Spanish navy at the port of Callao, capturing the flagship "*Esmeralda*," and so established Chilean naval supremacy in the Southern Pacific among the American Republics.

In that navy, consisting of nine men-of-war and sixteen transports, San Martin left Valparaiso for the Peruvian coast on August 20, 1820,\* with an army of 4,118 men, of which 2,313

\*It may be interesting to give a list of the ships which constituted the first Chilean navy, when the squadron left Valparaiso for Peru on August 20, 1820, under Lord Cochrane, and the way in which they were obtained.

Ship of the line "*San Martin*," of 64 guns, called before "*Cumberland*," which

were Argentines and 1805 Chileans. Eighteen days later he landed in Peru near the city of Pisco, to the south of Lima. The viceroy had over 23,000 men under his command, which he could concentrate against San Martin, and it required great generalship and fine manœuvering to baffle the Spanish army. After remaining a month and a half at Pisco, and sending a portion of his army to the interior to raise the people in favor of independence, San Martin sailed with the remainder of his army, on October 29, 1820, to Ancon, a port 20 miles north of Lima. When the Spanish army was being concentrated against him there he moved again, on November 8, having possession of the sea, to Huacho, about 70 miles north of Lima, thus severing the communication of the viceroy with his northern provinces. In the meantime the principal towns of Peru began to join the independent cause, and even a portion of the native army of the viceroy joined San Martin. The Viceroy was thus forced to evacuate Lima on July 6, 1821, and it was forthwith occupied by San Martin.

San Martin foresaw with his clear mind the great unrest and political turmoil which the adoption of republican institutions would necessarily entail upon the new nations, as they were not prepared for a form of government which requires an enlightened people, capable of self-government, and he therefore, as well as the Argentine government under Pueyrredon, favored the establishment of a monarchy, Bolivar being decidedly for a republican form of government.

San Martin was not to accomplish by himself his final object, as that task was reserved to Bolivar. In 1822 San Martin's con-

belonged to the English East India Company, and was bought for \$200,000 at Valparaiso by the Chilean government in 1818. Frigate "O'Higgins," 44 guns, formerly called "Maria Isabel," captured at Talcahuano October 28, 1818. Frigate "Lautaro," 50 guns, called before "Windham," belonging to English and American merchants of Valparaiso, was sold to the Chilean government for \$180,000, June, 1818. Frigate "Independencia," 28 guns, formerly called "Curacio," bought in the United States for \$150,000, June, 1819. Frigate "Calvarino," 18 guns, formerly called "Lucia," was bought by the Chilean government in 1818 for \$70,000. Frigate "Araucano," 16 guns, called before "Columbus," bought in the United States for \$33,000. Brig "Pueyrredon," 18 guns, called before "Aguila," belonged to the Spanish navy and entered Valparaiso in February, 1817, without knowing that the port was in the possession of the patriots. Schooner "Montezuma," 7 guns, captured at Callao in 1819. Sloop "Chacabuco," 20 guns, called before "Coquimbo," bought in Valparaiso in 1818. This ship remained to guard the Chilean coast.

The transports captured by the Chilean navy, and some of which were used to carry the army to Peru, were the "Magdalena," "Dolores," "Corlota," "Rosalia," and "Helena," formerly belonging to the Spanish government and captured by Admiral Blanco Encalada, and the merchant ships "Regina," "Aguila," "Victoria," and "Jeresana," captured by Lord Cochrane. Frigate "Thomas" was captured at Talcahuano June 8, 1818. Brig "San Miguel" was captured by the "Lautaro" in 1817. "Perla" and "Potrillo" were Chilean vessels which had been captured by the Spanish and recaptured by Lord Cochrane.



dition in Peru was difficult, as his army had been considerably reduced by hard service and sickness, he having only 8,500 men, many of them raw recruits, while the viceroy had in Upper Peru about 19,000 men who could be easily concentrated in a comparatively short time. San Martin thought it necessary, therefore, to have the assistance of Bolivar to give a speedy finishing blow to the Spanish dominion in Peru, and he proposed to meet Bolivar. They met in Guayaquil on July 26 and 27, 1822.

No authentic report of that interview has ever been published, and this has given rise to many surmises about its objects and results. From the events which preceded and followed the same, and from a letter written soon afterward by San Martin to Bolivar on August 29, 1822, and his conversations with friends, there is room to form an idea of what took place at the meeting. San Martin offered Bolivar to serve under his orders, if he would go with his victorious armies to Peru; but his proposal was not accepted, Bolivar saying that he could not leave Colombia without permission from the Colombian Congress, and he only agreed to send 1,500 men of his army to aid San Martin. It is well known that San Martin and Bolivar differed greatly in their views on many subjects relating to the work that they both had undertaken. The difference of opinion between the two regarding the government of the new states was another factor which contributed to prevent their acting in accord. One cause of irritation between them was the question of the port of Guayaquil, which San Martin thought ought to belong to Peru, or be decided by negotiations between the Colombian and Peruvian governments, while Bolivar had already annexed it to Colombia. San Martin understood that he was in Bolivar's way, and sincerely wishing the success of the cause of independence, proved himself a true patriot and a great man, preferring to sacrifice his future, and decided to withdraw from his field of operations, leaving his competitor alone with the sole responsibility for the course of future events.

San Martin consequently returned to Peru, where he had previously convoked a national congress to organize the country, and on the very day when congress met, on September 20, 1822, he resigned his command in Peru and sailed for Chile.

Bolivar's career was still more eventful. He fought the Spanish both in Venezuela and New Granada with very varying

success from 1810 to 1817, being sometimes victorious and as often crushed and defeated, and being twice obliged to fly from the country and take refuge in foreign lands. Finally he asserted his supremacy, and at the battle of Boyacá, fought on August 7, 1819, he achieved the independence of New Granada and captured Bogotá, its capital, while at Carabobo, fought on June 24, 1821, he achieved the independence of his native land, Venezuela, having previously occupied its capital, Caracas.

Bolívar, like San Martín, realized that his success could not be permanent, as long as the Spaniards were in possession of the neighboring countries, and more specially Peru, the principal Spanish stronghold in South America, which they used as a base of attack against the new nationalities, and he therefore decided to attack them first in Ecuador and eventually go to Peru. Both armies, each from opposite ends of South America, converged on Peru with the same object in view, of putting an end to the Spanish domination. He consequently marched his army to Ecuador and defeated the enemy at Bomboná on April 7, 1822, and achieved the independence of that country at the battle of Pichincha, fought on May 24, 1822.

As San Martín predicted, the patriots' army in Peru was defeated after he left the country, both at Torata and Moquegua. After those defeats and the destruction of the army organized by Peru, under General Santa Cruz, the Peruvian government made a treaty with Colombia on April 12, 1823, for the purpose of having the assistance of 6,000 troops, and finally after the country had fallen into anarchy, Bolívar made his appearance in Lima, where he was hailed as the Liberator of the country, the Peruvian congress appointing him, by decree dated at Lima on August 10, 1823, Dictator and Liberator of Peru, thus giving him entire civil and military control over the country, and realizing San Martín's prediction.

Bolívar, in full charge of the combined Peruvian, Chilean and Argentine armies as well as the whole of the Colombian army, marched against the Spaniards in Upper Peru, and fought and defeated at Junín, on August 6, 1824, a cavalry division, the flower of the Spanish army, and gave the finishing blow to the Spanish domination in South America, at the battle of Ayacucho, on December 9th of the same year, where Bolívar's army was commanded by Sucre. The Viceroy of Peru, General

La Cerna, had at Ayacucho 10,000 Spanish veterans, while Sucre had only 6,000 men; the Spaniards lost 2,000 killed and wounded and 3,000 prisoners, and the rest of the army surrendered to Sucre, who sent them home at Peru's expense.

Both San Martin and Bolivar died poor. San Martin ended his life in Europe in 1850, as a self-exile, without attempting to interfere in any manner with, or exercise any influence on, the political destinies of his country or of those in whose liberation he had so effectually assisted; while Bolivar died in Santa Marta in 1830, at the age of 47, broken hearted at the disruption of the Republic of Colombia, at the breaking out of civil war in his country, and at the ingratitude of many he had befriended.

When the enormous difficulties are considered that the liberating armies had to contend with, traversing immense distances in a very difficult and broken country without railways or even wagon roads, having often to transport their artillery on mule back, without any commissariat or money to pay the army, and often even without arms or ammunition, it is really wonderful what those men did. Indeed, their march can be advantageously compared to Alexander's invasion of Persia, with the difference in Alexander's favor that he went into a rich country and had at his disposal the spoils of the Persian royal family, one of the richest at that time, while these men went into a poor and unsettled country, terribly ravaged by a destructive war.

In Mexico, as in all the other Spanish colonies, the war of independence had begun in 1810, and we consider that it ended on September 27, 1821, when Iturbide entered the City of Mexico with his victorious army, although the war had been practically ended when the Spanish Viceroy O'Donaju signed with Iturbide at the city of Cordova on August 24, 1821, a treaty in which he recognized on behalf of the Spanish government the independence of Mexico.

In what is now called Central America the people remained under the Spanish government without any attempt to proclaim independence, very likely because they thought they could not cope with the power of the Spanish viceroy in Mexico. When they heard of Iturbide's success, however, they proclaimed their independence and annexation to Mexico on September 15, 1821. They seceded from Mexico in 1823, and established then, and not until then, the Central American con-

federation, under the name of the United Provinces of Central America, a confederation which lasted until 1839, when each of the five states became an independent nation.

This statement of facts shows that on March 8, 1822, when Mr. Monroe asked Congress to recognize the independence of the Spanish colonies in America, Mexico, the Central American States, New Granada, Venezuela, Buenos Ayres, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Chile, had fully accomplished their independence, and in Ecuador and Peru independence was practically accomplished, as Bolivar's army was then fighting under General Sucre at Ecuador, and the Spanish viceroy had evacuated Lima on account of San Martin's manœuvres since July 6, 1821. The independence of Bolivia, or Upper Peru as it was then called, had been practically accomplished when San Martin invaded Chile in 1817.

The above facts show that I was correct in saying that the United States government recognized the independence of the Spanish colonies, after they had fully accomplished the same, but that statement did not imply any complaint against this government, as the recognition of independence is the recognition of a fact which cannot be recognized before it has actually occurred. Any other conduct would have implied an alliance between the revolted colonies and the United States, and it would have been unreasonable for the colonies to expect this country to enter into any such alliance with them.

In making that assertion I have only repeated what distinguished statesmen, public men and prominent writers of this country have said before in a more clear manner, and I quoted in my article an authority containing a very explicit opinion on this subject. It would take a great deal more space than it is proper to occupy were I to quote the many declarations of American statesmen bearing on this matter, and I will, therefore, only quote one from Mr. John Quincy Adams, in a report which he made as Secretary of State to President Monroe, dated August 24, 1816, published in *Wharton's International Law Digest*, paragraph 70, Chapter III., page 521, Volume I., second edition :

“There is a stage in such revolutionary contests when the party struggling for independence has, as I conceive, a right to demand its acknowledgment by neutral parties, and when the acknowledgment may be granted without departure from the obligations of neutrality. It is the stage when the independence is established as matter of fact, so as to leave the chance of the opposite party to recover their dominion utterly desperate. The neutral

nation, must, of course, judge for itself when this period has arrived; and as the belligerent nation has the same right to judge for itself, it is very likely to judge differently from the neutral, and to make it a cause or pretext for war, as Great Britain did expressly against France in our Revolution, and substantially against Holland. If war thus results, in point of fact, from the measure of recognizing the contested independence, the moral right or wrong of the war depends upon the justice and sincerity and prudence with which the recognizing nation took the step. I am satisfied that the cause of the South Americans, so far as it consists in the assertion of independence against Spain, is just. But the justice of a cause, however it may enlist individual feelings in its favor, is not sufficient to justify third parties in siding with it. The fact and the right combined can alone authorize a neutral to acknowledge a new and disputed sovereignty."

Senator Money thinks that my assertion is incorrect, and he states that "as far as the law of nations would permit it, we (the United States) certainly gave material support to the cause of freedom in South America," and mentions in support of his assertion "the curious spectacle afforded of two ships exactly alike, built at the same time, in the same American shipyard, one for the Spanish king, and one for his insurgent subjects." If the laws of this country allowed such a proceeding, it was not an act in support of the revolted Spanish colonies, and neither was it an act in support of the king of Spain. Anything that is done for both of the contending parties cannot be said to be in favor of either of them or be looked upon as an act of great material or moral support.

As early as December 10, 1811, a resolution was reported by a committee of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, on the recognition of the independence of the South American Provinces, which was not acted upon. Several others were afterwards introduced in the House of Representatives of the United States Congress expressing sympathy with the insurrection of the American colonies, and this fact is mentioned in support of the assertion that the cause of independence had the moral support of the United States. I was very well aware of the very deep sympathy that the cause of independence awoke in the people of the United States and especially in the breast of Mr. Clay, who was the leader of the House on that subject, and I referred to it in my paper, giving it as much space as I possibly could; but a resolution introduced in the House of Representatives, specially when it is voted down, as were most of Mr. Clay's resolutions, cannot be called an act of moral assistance from the government of the United States, and my assertion referred to the

government and not to the people of the United States, whose sympathies, I know, were entirely with us.

The correctness of this statement appears very clearly from the following extract from a letter addressed by Mr. Gallatin, United States Minister at Paris, to Mr. John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, on November 5, 1818, and published in *Wharton's International Law Digest*, paragraph 70, Chapter 111, page 522, Volume I., second edition :

"I had upon every occasion stated that the general opinion of the United States must irresistibly lead to such a recognition; that it is a question, not of interest, but of feeling, and that this arose much less from the wish of seeing new republics established, than that of the emancipation of Spanish-America from Europe. . . . We have not, either directly or indirectly, excited the insurrection. It had been the spontaneous act of the inhabitants, and the natural effect of causes, which neither the United States nor Europe could have controlled. We had lent no assistance to either party; we had preserved a strict neutrality. But no European government could be surprised or displeased that in such a cause our wishes should be in favor of the success of the colonies, or that we should treat as independent powers those amongst them which had in fact established their independence."

The fact, mentioned also by me, of several missions being sent by the United States government to the struggling colonies to ascertain the true condition of things, and act accordingly, is also mentioned by Mr. Money in support of the assertion that this government gave moral support to the independent cause; but it seems to me that if an agent or a commission is sent to inquire whether independence has been accomplished and no action is taken by the government after sending such agent or commission, the necessary inference is that the struggle was not in a condition to be recognized, and therefore the result of such measure had necessarily to be, although not intentionally so, against the struggling patriots and in favor of their enemy.

The facts mentioned by Senator Money of the "tardiness and difficulties of communication at that time, the dissensions among the insurgents, the efforts of Peru, Chile, and La Plata to organize New Granada and Venezuela into a confederate republic, and those of the Central American States, in the same direction; the continued talk of alliances, offensive and defensive; the fear that early recognition of belligerency might prevent the negotiation or ratification of the treaty of 1819 ceding Florida to the United States; the swarms of privateers who on the South Atlantic and on the Spanish Main flew the insurgent flags and

committed the most atrocious acts of piracy," might have been sufficient to justify the United States in delaying recognition, if a complaint had been made on that point; but the question is not whether the action of the United States is or is not justifiable, but whether the government of the United States rendered any assistance to the insurgents before independence was accomplished. The United States followed a proper course under the circumstances. I must remark, however, that I was not aware that some of the incidents referred to had taken place.

To be sure, the United States government had recognized the belligerency of the revolted colonies before President Monroe asked Congress, in his message of March 2, 1822, to recognize their independence, but that was the recognition of a fact.

I have not been able to find the date of any declaration, if any was formally made, by which the United States recognized the belligerency of the revolted Spanish colonies. In Mr. Monroe's message of March 8, 1822, he says that they had enjoyed belligerent rights. He made the same statement in his annual messages of December 2, 1817, and December 7, 1819, as in the former he said "that the United States has maintained impartial neutrality between Spain and its provinces, our ports have been open to both, etc.," a statement which he corroborates in the latter in the following words: "An impartial neutrality has been followed in the Civil War between Spain and the Spanish Provinces in America, . . . and our ports have continued to be equally open to both parties, etc."

I must remark that several of the revolted Spanish colonies had from the beginning of the struggle armies which could compete with and often defeat the best troops of the Spanish army, who had fought in the Peninsula against Napoleon; had issued constitutions and organized regular governments; had in some cases improvised a navy which defeated the Spanish armada, and captured and held their respective capitals. They were therefore real belligerents engaged in a lawful war of independence.

Far from intending to belittle the importance of the recognition of belligerency, I, on the contrary, am glad to acknowledge it, not only as an act of justice but also as a favor. Although, generally speaking, the granting of what one considers to be a right is not taken as a favor, nevertheless it is so, when the third party can, in the exercise of his sovereignty, ignore the

right, as it can do, being the only judge of its obligations, and there being no way to compel its recognition, unless by force, which in that case was, of course, altogether out of the question.

But that recognition did not, of course, prevent the United States government from enforcing its neutrality laws, as appears from a list of individuals and vessels prosecuted during 1815 for violating the neutrality of the United States in and of the governments of the United Provinces of New Granada and the United Provinces of Mexico, transmitted by the Secretary of State on January 10, 1817.

I believed that, among Americans of Spanish origin, I was perhaps as well prepared as any other to appreciate the scope and transcendent result of the policy announced by President Monroe in his message of December 2, 1823, commonly known as the Monroe doctrine, and I am sorry that my remarks on that subject could be misunderstood. I did not say "that the Monroe doctrine was of no material advantage to the new republics," and much less "that it was of no value as giving moral support." My remarks about the Monroe doctrine were only elementary and were intended specially to make plain its meaning and scope to the American republics, where in some cases it is misunderstood, being construed into a policy which has for its object the final absorption by the United States of all the American republics. If the paragraph of my paper referring to this point is carefully read, it will be seen that my assertion to the effect that the recognition by the United States of the independence of the Spanish colonies in America was only theoretical, referred to Mr. Monroe's message of March 8, 1822, in which he announced such recognition, and not to his message of December 2, 1823. All the remarks which bear on the subject of the Monroe doctrine are, therefore, without foundation.

I have great respect for Mr. Clay, who was, as I have just said, a sincere friend of the revolted Spanish colonies, and I would not willingly say anything to impeach his patriotism or integrity. I did not imagine, therefore, that my remarks in examining Mr. Clay's reasons for requesting the governments of Mexico and Colombia, on behalf of the government of the United States, to suspend a joint expedition that they were fitting out against Cuba, could be construed as a charge of insincerity either against Mr. Clay or against President John Quincy



Adams, whom I equally respect for his pure patriotism, high character and integrity, and lofty views, and who I well know was not a pro-slavery man. I did not say nor imply that the reasons stated by Mr. Clay were imaginary, and, much less, that he had advanced them knowing them to be unfounded; what I said was that I thought that besides the reasons expressed in Mr. Clay's letter there might have been others, and I acknowledge that my surmise may be incorrect.

As considerations which supported my assertion, which, as I have just said, was only a surmise, I had the fact that Mr. Clay was a Southern man, and that President Adams' administration was the result of a compromise in which he could not well support a policy which might in some way affect the slavery question in the United States, then the leading question in this country. Senator Money states that "the reason mentioned as given by Mr. Clay was not the only one which he avowed." The only official paper I have seen on that subject, and the one on which I based my statement, was a letter addressed by Mr. Clay, as Secretary of State, to Mr. Everett, United States Minister to Madrid, dated April 13, 1826, enclosing a copy of his letter to the Colombian and Mexican Ministers in Washington, of December 20, 1825, in which he recommended the suspension of the combined expedition, and which was published in March of the present year by the *Monitor*, a newspaper of the City of Mexico, a translation of which I insert below.\* If Mr. Clay avowed any other reasons, I am not aware of them. I expressed the opinion that Mr. Clay had other reasons besides those which he stated, and I am glad to be in accord with Senator Money on this point, possibly our only difference of opinion being which were those other reasons not avowed.

\* The letter referred to is the following, which, as it has been retranslated from Spanish into English, cannot have the same wording as the original:

"WASHINGTON, April 13, 1826.

"I addressed on the 20th of last December a note to the Ministers of Colombia and Mexico, copy whereof I enclose, for the purpose of inducing their respective governments to suspend any expedition which they might be preparing, either individually or collectively, against the islands of Cuba and Porto Rico.

"Great Britain is firmly convinced that the United States will never consent that those islands should belong to England, no matter what might be the consequences of such policy. France is also aware that we would not be indifferent to her obtaining the possession of said islands.

"The situation of the great maritime powers (the United States, Great Britain, and France) is nearly equivalent to an absolute guarantee of the possession of those islands in favor of Spain, but it is impossible to enter into any agreement by treaty guaranteeing such possession, and the President wishes you should let the Spanish Government know that we cannot bind ourselves to any obligation whatever looking to such guarantee. You must continue to decline any proposition for that purpose, if any such is presented."

Studying further this subject, I have found that the United States could not have acted in any other manner than they did in this case, for the simple reason that they had committed themselves to follow that course. This fact appears very clearly stated in the following extract from a note by Mr. Richard Henry Dana, to paragraph 68, page 106, Chapter II. of Part II., of *Wheaton's Elements of International Law*, Boston edition of 1866, which shows at the same time that the people of Cuba, far from being entirely satisfied with the Spanish rule, desired their emancipation from the mother country, when the other American colonies of Spain had either already accomplished their independence or were fighting for the same :

“The people of Cuba, already divided between the parties of the king and the Cortes, and terrified by symptoms of slave insurrections, had among them large numbers who, dissatisfied with Spanish rule, looked to other powers for protection—some to Great Britain, but far the larger part to the United States. About September, 1822, the latter party sent a secret agent to confer with President Monroe. They declared that if the United States government would promise them protection, and ultimate admission into the Union, a revolution would be made to throw off the Spanish authority, of the success of which they had no doubt. While this proposition was before Mr. Monroe's cabinet, he received an unofficial and circuitous communication from the French Minister, asserting that his government had positive information of the design of Great Britain to take possession of Cuba. The American government replied to the Cuban deputation that the friendly relations of the United States with Spain did not permit us to promise countenance or protection to insurrectional movements, and advised the people of Cuba to adhere to their Spanish allegiance; at the same time informing them that an attempt upon Cuba by either Great Britain or France would place the relations of Cuba with the United States in a very different position. Mr. Rush was instructed to inform Mr. Canning that the United States could not see with indifference the possession of Cuba by any European power other than Spain, and to inform him of the rumors that had reached the cabinet. Mr. Canning disavowed emphatically all intention on the part of Great Britain to take possession of Cuba, but avowed her determination not to see with indifference its occupation by either France or the United States, and proposed an understanding between the British, French, and American governments, without any formal convention, that Cuba should be left in the quiet possession of Spain. This was assented to by Mr. Monroe; but he had no communication with France on the subject, leaving that to the management of Great Britain.”

The fact that the slavery question had something to do in this case appears also stated in the following extract from a note of Mr. Dana's on the Monroe Doctrine to *Wheaton's Elements of International Law*, above quoted, paragraph 68, page 111, Chapter II., Part II. :

"The slaveholding interest was clearly looking to Cuba, not only as an addition to its political power in the Union, but to prevent abolition of slavery there by some other power; and it is known that Mr. Adams had a noticeable leaning in favor of its importance to us in a military and commercial view."

The Cubans had been conspiring to proclaim their independence since similar movements began on the mainland. The example of the Spanish colonies in America which had revolted against the mother country and accomplished their independence could not but influence the Cubans to attempt to attain the same object. Mr. Ballou, of Massachusetts, who in 1854 visited Cuba, and who remained there for a long time, returned to this country and wrote a book on that subject, in which he says :

"When the Cubans saw that their brothers in the Spanish-American colonies had revolted against the mother country, and that most of them had secured their independence, they thought of following in their footsteps, and in 1823 the disaffected party conspired against Spain, relying on the promise of Simon Bolivar of throwing an invading force into the island. The conspiracy was discovered and suppressed prematurely. In 1826 some Cuban agitators residing in Caracas attempted a new expedition which failed and caused the execution of Don Francisco de Puerto y Velazco and Don Bernabe Sanchez."

Senator Money seriously misunderstands me when he says that Mr. Clay's caution is regarded by me as unfriendly. I did not express any such opinion, as my object was merely to mention a fact without commenting on it.

How Mr. Clay's action on this question could be of the most vital service to Mexico is more than I can comprehend. Spain did not feel the necessity of terminating the war with the colonies already gone from her in order to secure Cuba and Porto Rico, as she was bent on recovering Mexico, and in 1829 she sent an armed military expedition for that purpose under General Barradas, which landed at Tampico. It was not until 1836, when all hopes of recovering her dominion in Mexico were lost, that Spain recognized our independence.

The assertion that Mexico did not emancipate her few slaves until several years after the events considered in the paper that I am examining is incorrect. The leader of the independent movement, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, proclaimed independence on September 16, 1810, and on December 6 of the same year he issued a decree abolishing slavery, and the slaves were emancipated in such places as were under the patriots' control.

The first Mexican Congress, which met at Chilpancingo in 1813, and issued a constitution on October 22, 1814, promulgated also a decree abolishing slavery; and as soon as independence was accomplished the abolition of slavery was ratified by another decree issued on July 13, 1824, soon after the City of Mexico had been occupied, and it was then carried into effect in the whole country. The fact that our present constitution of 1857 repeats the prohibition against holding slaves in Mexico, a provision which also appears in all our former constitutions, has caused the common opinion prevailing in this country that we only abolished slavery in 1857.

I shall be entirely satisfied if I have succeeded in showing in this paper that there is nothing in the former one that can reasonably be taken as a complaint against the government of the United States, or any censure of its policy, as my only purpose was to state facts which are matter of history, and which are, I think, highly creditable to this government.

M. ROMERO.